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ABSTRACT

This report describes the joint efforts of the Evaluation of Teaching program of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education and the Office of Research and Evaluation of the Austin Independent School District to develop a competency based teacher evaluation system. The task assigned was to produce a system that reduced the vagueness and the time demands on evaluators and could be uniformly applied throughout the district. The expressed purpose of the new system was to provide initiative for professional growth by supplying individuals feedback on their performance and to aid administrators in making contractual decisions concerning individuals. The report delineates the research activities accomplished (including surveys of parents and school personnel) in order to develop the evaluation system. References and tables of competency statements and categories used for stratified sampling are also included. (DS)

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Evaluation of Teaching

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DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPETENCY BASED PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL EVALUATION SYSTEM: A COOPERATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN AN R&D CENTER AND SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Development of a Competency Based Professional Personnel Evaluation System: A Cooperative Effort Between an R&D Center and School System

This report describes the joint efforts of the Evaluation of Teaching (EOT) program of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education and the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) of the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to develop a competency based teacher evaluation system. The report will treat the following topics: the recent history and description of the revision of the professional personnel evaluation system adopted by the AISD Board of Trustees in January, 1978, and a delineation of research activities accomplished by EOT and ORE in order to develop the evaluation system with major emphasis on tasks accomplished by EOT.

In 1975, the professional personnel evaluation system in use by AISD consisted of a teacher evaluation form, a new teacher checklist, and a timetable for the completion of these forms. The person responsible for accomplishing the evaluation was the principal. With no provision for evaluator training, it was difficult to obtain uniformity among supervisors in the utilization of the system. With these problems in mind, the AISD Board of Trustees appointed a committee of teachers and administrators to revise the existing system during the 1975-76 school year. However, the revised system produced by this committee was seen by the Board as less than satisfactory and was not adopted. The primary dissatisfactions the Board found with the revised system were the vagueness of some criteria which could have led to legal problems and the extensiveness of the evaluation process which could make excessive time demands on evaluators.

At the June 6, 1977 meeting the Board identified the revision of the professional personnel evaluation system as an item of high priority for the 1977-78 school year and assigned the responsibility for the development of a new system to its Personnel Committee. This committee then reassigned the task to the Department of Staff Personnel (DSP) which was to be supported by the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and the school attorney. The revised system was to be presented to the Board Personnel Committee in December, 1977.

The task assigned by the Personnel Committee was to produce a system which reduced the vagueness and the time demands on evaluators, and could be uniformly applied throughout the district. The expressed purpose of the new system was (1) to provide initiative for professional growth by supplying individuals feedback on their performance and (2) to aid administrators in making contractual decisions concerning individuals.

The approach proposed by the DSP and ORE to accomplish the three points of the task assigned by the Personnel Committee was: (1) to reduce the vagueness in the criteria for evaluation in the system proposed by the committee of teachers and administrators by basing the evaluation instrument and system upon behaviorally defined competencies important for "good" teaching; (2) to reduce the time demands on the principals or unit supervisors by adopting a team approach to evaluation; and, (3) to enhance the uniformity of the application of the evaluation system by embodying the system in a handbook delineating required recommended evaluation procedures.

One salient feature of these procedures is the recommendation that teachers be observed while teaching and the information so obtained be one basis of their evaluation. Also, recognizing that uniformity in application

of the system would be enhanced if training for the various evaluation team members were provided, it was recommended to the Board Personnel Committee that systematic training be provided. The importance of such training was subsequently recognized by the Board Committee, and inclusion of training as a component of the entire system was approved by the full Board.

The leader of the evaluation team would be the principal or unit supervisor who is the individual ultimately responsible for the evaluation of personnel. Such an evaluation team would consist of the principal or unit supervisor and any or all of the following persons: assistant principals or head teachers, deans, instructional coordinators and other administrative and support staff as circumstances require.

The primary responsibilities assumed by ORE in this endeavor were for the identification and validation of competencies important for "good" teaching (or the appropriate activities for other professionals) and preparation of the handbook. Their planned first step was to review research involving competencies in an attempt to discover which competencies have been utilized previously for evaluation and which ones (if any) have been empirically related to "good" teaching. The second step was to take the set of competencies from the research literature and those identified by the previous committee and select a manageable subset, for which opinions of district personnel as to the importance of these competencies for the performance of particular duties would be obtained. On the basis of these opinions a final reduced subset of competencies would be formed and these would constitute the basis of the evaluation system.

Cooperative Effort

The involvement of the EOT staff in the development and validation of the evaluation system occurred as the result of the confluence of the needs

of two diverse groups. First, it was the hope of the National Institute of Education (NIE), the sponsoring agency of the R&D Center, that the Center be involved in cooperative activities with AISD. And, second, since ORE had not been allocated any additional resources to carry out their part of the task of development of the revised evaluation system in the limited time allotted, they were interested in obtaining knowledgeable assistance. Because the experience and available skills of the EOT staff appeared to match those needed by ORE better than any of the other of the Center's programs, NIE agreed to support a cooperative effort between ORE and EOT for the purpose of revising the professional personnel evaluation system used by AISD.

This cooperative effort was initiated in August, 1977 when several planning meetings occurred with staff members of both EOT and ORE present. The basic division of work agreed upon gave executive duties and responsibilities to ORE and placed EOT in a support role. Specifically, it was decided that EOT personnel would assist in the identification and validation of competencies important for "good" teaching.

A planning document (Christner, 1977) was produced which describes the division of labor agreed upon by ORE and EOT. The tasks delineated by Christner fall under the two major activities mentioned previously which much be accomplished sequentially. The first activity involved research to identify competencies previously used in teacher evaluation and to determine which of the competencies used in teacher evaluation have been validated. These tasks were begun by ORE personnel, but were assumed and brought to completion by EOT personnel. These efforts will be presented in a section titled Description of Competency Search.

The second activity involved the selection of the competency statements on which the evaluation system is based. This activity was composed of two

parts. The first part consisted of taking the lists of competency statements previously found and selecting a subset of these statements based on the professional judgment of ORE personnel. The second part consisted of taking the subset of competency statements and further reducing their number by empirical means. The basis for this further reduction of the size of the subset was an investigation of the face validity of the competency statements.

The investigation of the face validity of the competency statements was accomplished by having various groups of AISD personnel rate a random sample of the competency statements on how important each was for effective teaching and how much staff development was needed for each. The sampling for both personnel and statements was performed on a proportional and stratified basis. In this way all competency statements were rated by some personnel. The basis for the stratification of personnel was by speciality, level and sex, and these groupings are shown in Table 1. The basis for the stratification of competency statements was by content, and the content categories and the competency statements for each category relevant for specific groups are discussed elsewhere in this report and shown in Table 2.

The investigation of the face validity was conducted in three steps. The first step was the production of forms containing the samples of competency statements. The random sampling and printing of these forms were performed by computer by EOT personnel; the procedure is presented in more detail in a later section of this report titled The Face Validity Investigation. The second step, distribution of the forms to persons in the appropriate strata and the receiving, coding and keypunching of the data from the returned forms, was accomplished by ORE personnel. The third step, processing the data in

order to produce frequency distributions of the responses for relevant groups of personnel, was accomplished by EOT personnel.

These frequency distributions were the basis for the final selection of competency statements by ORE and DSP personnel. This final selection was accomplished by deleting all competency statements which failed to meet specified quantitative criteria of rated importance.

Subsequently the handbook was completed by ORE personnel, and the revised professional evaluation system was adopted by the AISD Board of Trustees in January 1978. The scope of the evaluation system is shown by the table of contents for the handbook presented in Appendix A.

The remaining sections of this report present the details of the tasks accomplished by EOT which are (1) The Competency Search, and (2) The Face Validity Investigation. The final section contains two parts: (1) Generation of the Survey Forms and (2) Data Analysis.

The Competency Search

As part of its collaborative effort with ORE, the EOT program undertook a survey of the validation studies conducted by other researchers interested in competency based evaluation. Although the final evaluation instrument developed by ORE will include procedures for the assessment of librarians, counselors, special education teachers and teacher aides, as well as elementary, junior high and high school teachers, the validation studies surveyed were all concerned with teacher assessment since that is where the focus of educational research concerned with competency has been. Validation studies, in this context, refer to research relating the behaviors of teachers, measured via the competency instrument being studied, to the behaviors of pupils, measured either by specific observations in the classroom, or by achievement in various academic areas.

A number of researchers who had participated in the construction of competency based instruments were consulted and the reports of their efforts at construction and validation of the instruments were reviewed. In particular, these included publications from the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, a six-year project being conducted by the California Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing (MacDonald, 1976); information from a project being conducted at Florida State University under the auspices of the Florida State Department of Education (Carey, 1975; Wilson, 1976); reports from the Carroll County, Georgia, Competency Based Certification Project (Lorentz, 1977; Soar, Coker, & Lorentz, 1977); articles from a literature search on teacher evaluation conducted through the computer-based Educational Resources Information Center; and teacher evaluation instruments (with manuals describing their use and development, if possible) from cities across the United States.

It was decided that the competency structure developed under the auspices of the Florida Department of Education (Wilson, 1976) provided a desirable model of a competency based instrument. In this system, five global categories (communication skills, basic knowledge, technical skills, administrative skills, and interpersonal skills) are subdivided into 23 generic competencies believed to be essential to effective classroom teaching. These 23 generic competencies may be further differentiated into specific, concretely defined behaviors which are indicative of the possession of the competency on the part of the teachers. This structure was subsequently recommended to ORE.

Since validation research on the Florida competencies had not been completed as of fall 1977, validation results from other endeavors were reviewed for their indirect support of the Florida instrument. These

reports were a review of process-product research (Medley, 1977), and a validation study of a competency based teacher certification system, developed by the West Georgia project (Soar, Coker, & Lorentz, 1977). All of the teacher behaviors identified in the review of process-product studies and in the West Georgia project as being related to pupil achievement were categorized according to the related competency on the Florida instrument. (The pupil achievement measures included math, reading, and affective growth, and were subdivided by grade level and socioeconomic status.) This categorization of specific teacher behaviors which had been found by past research to be related to pupil achievement was submitted to the staff of ORE to provide a research based framework for the development of their own competency based evaluation procedures.

The Face Validity Investigation

Generation of Survey Forms

Since the new professional personnel evaluation system was intended for use with four groups of professionals who need different competencies, lists of competency statements were developed by ORE for teachers, counselors, special education teachers, and librarians. In order that the face validity of these competency statements could be investigated, opinions of these and other groups about the competency statements were solicited using different instruments containing items relevant for each group. The other groups whose opinions were solicited were parents, pupils, principals, central office administrators, and University of Texas education professors.

In order that EOT personnel could produce the necessary forms, four sets of teacher competency statements were provided by ORE: one for teachers and administrators (90 statements), one for counselors (73 statements), one

for special education teachers (99 statements), and one for librarians (76 statements). Most of the counselor, special education, and librarian statements were a subset of the teacher/administrator statements. For these special groups, statements from the set of 90 which were irrelevant to their jobs were eliminated and others more relevant to their jobs were added. All four sets of statements had been organized in outline form, consisting of three main headings ("personal and professional qualities," "teaching effectiveness," and "interpersonal skills"). These main headings were themselves subdivided into several groups of statements. This organizational scheme which had been adopted by ORE is quite similar to the one developed by Wilson (1976).

Each questionnaire contained a random sample of competency statements. For each competency statement the respondent was provided (1) a 5-point rating scale for the perceived importance of that competency for effective job performance (a rating of 1 indicated little importance and a rating of 5 indicated great importance), (2) a 2-point rating scale for the perceived need for training in the competency (a rating of 1 indicated training was needed and a rating of 2 indicated that training was not needed), (3) a space to write an example of a behavior indicating outstanding performance in the competency, (4) a space to write an example of a behavior indicating poor performance in the competency, and (5) a space in which to indicate if a competency statement was hard to understand.

Randomized questionnaire forms were generated by EOT personnel for all school district professional personnel. The students, parents, central office administrators, and University of Texas professors received a standard set of statements produced by ORE which were chosen from the original list of 90. Special groups (such as special education teachers, counselors,

and librarians) received sets of statements appropriate for their profession. However, all professional groups, whether they received a supplemental set of statements or not, received a set of competency statements randomly sampled from the appropriate statement pool. All professional groups received a set of 16 randomly selected statements, except for principals who received 45 statements. In all cases, a specified number of statements were randomly sampled from each of the subheadings of the teacher competency outline, and the chosen statements were printed in random order on the questionnaire. Thus, while no two questionnaire forms were the same (except by chance), this technique of stratified random sampling insured that each form contained a specified number of statements from each subheading of the outline.

Randomized questionnaires were printed, supplemental statements were attached where necessary (i.e., for special education teachers, counselors, and librarians), and the final survey forms were sent along with a cover letter to all school personnel. To maximize the return rate, school principals were asked to urge professional personnel to complete their forms. A return rate among school personnel of approximately 80% was achieved. The high school students who participated in the study were administered the questionnaires at one sitting and these were collected upon their completion. This was also true of one of the parent groups. The other parent group was responsible for returning their forms, and approximately 40% of these were received.

Data Analysis

At the time at which the randomized survey forms were printed, computer files were generated which listed the statements included on each form. After the questionnaires were keypunched, under the direction of ORE, these

files were used to link each questionnaire's responses with the appropriate statements. Using this procedure, respondents' ratings of each statement were compiled.

Since the final selection of competency statements was to be based on the mean "importance" ratings, the next step in the empirical validity study was to obtain descriptive statistics for the frequency distributions of the values representing opinions of the various groups of personnel for each competency statement. As previously indicated, data were collected for groups of personnel which were based on speciality, level, and sex. These groups are shown in Table 1. Frequency distributions were obtained for each statement for each group for both rating scales as cell size premitted for the four instruments. In addition, because of the hierarchical nature of the formation of the groups who rated statements pertaining to teachers, in situations in which cell size permitted, frequency distributions of opinions about teacher competencies were obtained for factoral combinations of relevant groups. This factoral arrangement of groups accomplished with The University of Texas CDC 6600/6400 Computer System and program DISTATJ[1] permits the comparison of ratings of teacher competencies by composite groups of (1) males and females; (2) elementary, junior high, and high school personnel; (3) academic and nonacademic personnel; (4) elementary Title I and elementary non-Title I personnel; and, (5) administrators at the various levels. Also a two-way factoral analysis of variance was performed using program AOV123 (Veldman, 1976) on the rated importance of each of the 90 teacher competency statements as dependent variables with level (elementary, secondary), and status (teacher or administrator) to produce an orderly presentation of the group means.

The distributions of rated importance of all the competency statements for job performance for all four instruments were negatively skewed as all statements received high ratings. Two decision rules were used by ORE and DSP for deleting competency statements. First, a competency statement was eliminated if there was no mean rating for any group above 4.5 and if any mean rating for a group was 4.0 or lower. Second, if the mean rating was consistently below 4.25 and either student or parent groups rated the competency statement as unimportant, the statement was eliminated. The ratings of the education professors were not used to eliminate competency statements.

Following this procedure, 63 of the 90 teacher competency statements were chosen; 70 of the 99 special education competency statements were chosen; 56 of the 73 competency statements for counselors were chosen; and 63 of the 76 competency statements for librarians were chosen for inclusion in the evaluation system. The competency statements and mean ratings for the competency statements by the various groups are presented in Appendix M of ORE Publication 77.53, June 1978.

Reference Note

1. Program DISTATJ is an unpublished program written by Earl Jennings, Department of Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

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Table 1

Groups of Specialities of AISD Professional Personnel Used for Stratified Sampling

Teacher groups:

- Kindergarten-third grade, academic subject area, low SES school
- Kindergarten-third grade, academic subject area, middle to upper SES school
- Intermediate grade, academic subject area, low SES school
- Intermediate grade, academic subject area, middle to upper SES school
- Sixth grade, academic subject area
- Elementary (kindergarten-sixth grade), nonacademic subject area
- Elementary (kindergarten-sixth grade), special education
- Title I
- Junior high, male, academic subject area
- Junior high, female, academic subject area
- Junior high, male, nonacademic subject area
- Junior high, female, nonacademic subject area
- Junior and senior high, special education
- Senior high, male, academic subject area
- Senior high, female, academic subject area
- Senior high, male, nonacademic subject area
- Senior high, female, nonacademic subject area

Additional groups:

- Secondary school administrators
- Elementary school administrators
- Secondary counselors
- Elementary counselors
- Secondary librarians
- Elementary librarians
- Visiting teachers
- Special education teachers (in special programs)
- Support personnel (in special programs)
- Elementary coordinators, area directors, and bilingual instructional specialists)
- Secondary coordinators and area directors
- Special education supervisors
- Student development staff members

Table 2

Competency Statements and Categories of Competency Statements Used for Stratified Sampling

I. Personal and Professional Qualities

A. Personal Qualities

1. Is physically fit.
2. Is emotionally stable.
3. Exhibits poise and self-control.
4. Has a wholesome sense of humor.
5. Presents an effective role model.
6. Is punctual and alert.
7. Behaves rationally and realistically.
8. Shows initiative and imagination.
9. Shows common sense.
10. Maintains an appropriate appearance.
11. Shows enthusiasm for work.
12. Speech and voice are effective and pleasant.
13. Exhibits overall positive approach.
14. Demonstrates professional growth.
15. Is involved in professional activities.
16. Participates in district in-service.
17. Is personally and professionally ethical.
18. Dress is suitable and avoids extremes.

B. Procedural and Record Keeping Skills

1. Keeps school records and reports up-to-date and accurate.
2. Turns in reports on time.
3. Recognizes the necessity for administrative policies and procedures.
4. Complies with school board policies.
5. Complies with central office procedures.
6. Dependably complies with local campus routines.
7. Consistently works cooperatively with all grades or subjects areas.
8. Documents student progress.

II. Teaching Effectiveness

A. Instructional Skills

1. Prepares written lesson plans whose instruction objectives are evident to students and self.
2. Designs lessons creatively.
3. Designs lessons which incorporate a variety of materials, instructional techniques, and learning activities.
4. Presents subject matter which is appropriate to the needs, abilities and interests of students.

5. Utilizes teaching and learning materials available from sources outside his/her students.
6. Students know and understand teacher's standards for learning performance.
7. Inspires pupils to develop and strengthen their ethical values.
8. Utilizes lessons and activities which develop the student's understanding of a multicultural society.
9. Prepares good tests and evaluation activities over material covered.
10. Administers standardized tests properly.
11. Interprets own tests and evaluation activities accurately.
12. Interprets standardized test data accurately.
13. Interprets test data to child competently.
14. Interprets test and evaluation data to parents competently.
15. Designs lessons which result in student learning.
16. Designs lessons and units whose content is clear, logical, and sequential.

B. Classroom Management Skills

1. Encourages and inspires each pupil to work to his capacity.
2. Provides opportunities for each pupil to gain recognition in developing a desirable status with his peer group.
3. Makes assignments appropriate to the student's instructional level.
4. Gives careful attention to the physical condition and appearance of the classroom.
5. Maintains good class control in an atmosphere conducive to good learning.
6. Organizes the class routine such that little time is lost in transition from one learning activity to another.
7. Has a classroom organization for quick and efficient learning material distribution.
8. Has a system whereby students have someone from whom to request assistance when the teacher is occupied.
9. Has a written set of procedures in evidence for students to take care of routine tasks such as restroom visits, pencil sharpening, use of reference materials, etc.
10. Has a lesson plan for the day such that each student moves smoothly through the day's learning activities.
11. Uses discipline procedures which prevent behavior problems from arising.
12. Has a system whereby students give careful attention to condition, appearance, and care of the classroom and its supplies and equipment.
13. Uses behavior management when problems do arise that preserves student and teacher dignity and self-esteem.

C. Expertise in Basic Skills and Subject Areas

1. Has knowledge and broad background in subject matter taught.
2. Is well informed concerning latest developments in field.

3. Demonstrates knowledge and good practice of basic essentials of standard English: (In oral and written communication and in spelling).
4. Demonstrates knowledge and good practice in basic essentials of mathematics skills and concepts.
5. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of dialect/language differences in students taught.
6. Presents material verbally in a clear and understandable fashion.

III. Interpersonal Skills

1. Promotes positive self-image in students.
2. Promotes students' self-control.
3. Is consistent in relationships with students.
4. Is cordial and impartial in relationships with students.
5. Recognizes and plans appropriately for the emotional needs of students.
6. Helps individual students cope with problems and develop appropriate plans.
7. Is adaptable when dealing with individual and cultural differences.
8. Communicates with students sympathetically, accurately and with understanding.
9. Conducts parent-teacher conferences competently.
10. Works with parents regularly towards the students' best interests.
11. Communicates with parents sympathetically, accurately and with understanding.
12. Accepts criticism or recognition gracefully.
13. Consistently promotes friendly relationships through active participation in faculty groups and meetings.
14. Works effectively with teachers, student teachers, and support personnel.
15. Maintains constructive relationships with school and district administration.

V. Support Personnel Competency Areas

A. Counselors

1. Communicates an accurate picture of available counseling services.
2. Provides effective personal counseling services to students on an individual basis.
3. Provides effective personal counseling services to students in a group setting if appropriate.
4. Advises students about appropriate course selection.
5. Provides accurate information on graduation requirements.
6. Provides accurate information about college entrance requirements and college choice.

Appendix A

Contents of the AISD Professional Personnel Evaluation Handbook

I. Introduction

What the handbook contains and how to use it as well as data summaries.

II. Policies

A straightforward statement of the district regulations regarding contracts.

III. Procedures

A. Required Procedures

Lists exactly what evaluators have to do in the evaluation process to satisfy the district (includes the evaluation forms used).

B. Recommended Procedures

Details procedures that it is preferred evaluators follow in addition to those required.

IV. Behavioral Descriptors

Lists teacher and student behaviors evaluators should look for in assessing good teacher performance and poor teacher performance in each competency area.

V. Improving Evaluatee Performance

Deals with working with staff for improvement. Contains some planning materials and extensively details district resources available to aid in improving performance in each competency area.

VI. Outline of Recommended Procedure for Working with Staff in Contractual Difficulty

Details what determines contractual difficulty and steps in addition to those in Section V for working with these evaluatees toward improvement.

VII. Evaluator Training Resources

Details skills evaluators need to carry out the evaluations competently and materials on and sources of help in these areas.

VIII. Appendices

Contains possible observation forms and/or systems the evaluator might use and possible parent student input forms.